

Product/Service Description Document
Proposed Changes to Wireless Emergency Alert Wording for Snow
Squall Warnings

April 2020

Part I - Mission Connection

- a. Product/Service Description - The National Weather Service (NWS) is requesting comments on proposed changes to Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) wording for Snow Squall Warnings (SQW) until July 1, 2020. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rule changes allow for the expansion of Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA) from the existing maximum of 90 characters to a maximum of 360 characters. NWS is soliciting feedback through July 1 on both the proposed expansion of Snow Squall Warnings to use the new 360 character maximum and the proposed content of the NWS Snow Squall Warning messages in English and Spanish carried by WEA.
- b. Product Type - Proposed Operational
- c. Purpose - The change in FCC rules expands WEA to 360 characters and allows the NWS to provide wireless customers with more detailed, actionable information. The expansion of the message length will significantly increase the amount of information conveyed about a hazard during an emergency to the message recipient. The inclusion of Spanish messages will also expand the reach of NWS messaging to an audience which has been underserved by NWS WEA messaging in the past. The provision of NWS 90 character WEA messages will continue until further notice.
- d. Audience - The audience for NWS WEA messages is the public within the area warned where NWS meteorologists have assessed a reasonable chance for a life-threatening hazard whose consequences can be mitigated or minimized by immediate action.
- e. Presentation Format - NWS WEA messages are presented in two ways:
 - 1. CAP - CAP (Common Alerting Protocol) is the vehicle the NWS uses to disseminate a message through FEMA IPAWS to the wireless devices of those in the warned area. The tag used to provide the message for WEA and the area designated for alerting are highlighted.

Active NWS CAP messages can be found on the Internet at:
<https://alerts.weather.gov>
 - 2. WEA - An example of the proposed WEA message is provided at the end of this document.

A full listing of NWS WEA messages can be found here:
<https://www.weather.gov/wrn/wea360>
- f. Feedback Method - Feedback on the proposed changes to WEA messages for SQWs can be provided via a survey at the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ProposedWEASnowSquallWarnings>

Or provided directly to:

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Part II – Technical Description

- a. Format & Science Basis – The composition of the NWS WEA 360 character messages for Snow Squall Warnings will continuously be reviewed and updated based on social science research, operational service assessments, and the continuous study of public feedback associated with all NWS products and services. They may be revised to provide for the clearest communications to the public and recommended safety actions. It is commonly accepted that effective messaging should include the following pieces of information:
 - a. Source of the message
 - b. Description of the hazard
 - c. Local personalization (through text or the restriction on the area receiving the message)
 - d. The consequences of inaction
 - e. Protective actions
 - f. Time when protective actions should be taken
 - g. How protective actions reduce the consequences
 - h. Expiration time (when applicable)
- b. Product Availability – The WEA messages are found in the CAP message anytime a Snow Squall Warning is issued for snow squalls that are believed to have a reasonable chance of being life-threatening and consequences can be mitigated by taking action. English 360 character WEA messages and Spanish WEA messages will be implemented following the comment and review period of this release.
- c. Additional Information – A full description of NWS Complementary Dissemination Services is provided in NWSI 10-1704, which is available on the Internet at:

<https://www.nws.noaa.gov/directives/010/010.php>

Proposed 360 Character and Spanish Language WEA Messages for SQWs:

Current English Message (90 Character Max)

Snow Squall Warning til hh:mm tz ddd. Sudden whiteouts. Icy roads. Slow down!
-NWS

Proposed English Message (360 Character Max)

National Weather Service: Snow Squall Warning until hh:mm tzT ddd. Slow down or delay travel! Be ready for a sudden drop to near zero visibility and icy roads in heavy snow.

Proposed Spanish Message (90 Character Max)

Aviso de Turbonada de Nieve hasta hh:mm tz ddd. Pobre visibilidad! Reduzca la velocidad!

Proposed Spanish Message (360 Character Max)

Servicio Nacional de Meteorologia: Aviso de Turbonada de Nieve hasta las hh:mm PM tzT. Reduzca la velocidad o retrase su viaje! Preparese para una caida repentina de visibilidad cercana a cero y carreteras heladas en nevadas fuertes.